



King Mural © District of Columbia Public Library

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., gave powerful expression and emotional depth to the Afro-American struggle for racial justice. A man of complexity, his importance to the history of 20th-century America is difficult to grasp. Certainly Dr. King was the most successful black leader in a post-World War II generation of exceptional leaders, and because of his assassination on April 4, 1968, he is that generation's most prominent but not its only martyr.

Several qualities of Dr. King probably explain his ascension from the Baptist pulpit to international prominence. He was enormously gifted in providing powerful images for the social ills of American society — images made all the more vivid because of his eloquent and compelling oratory. Thousands of Americans, the descendants of African slaves, found in Dr. King a man deserving of their trust. He became the pastor of a movement that was at once fraught with dangers and high expectations. Dr. King's leadership was possible because he drew from important yet common themes found in black folk culture: personal courage, Christian faith, individual respectability and humor. He was a man of the people who drew talented individuals into the civil rights struggle and with them made the American people confront the bitter reality of racial injustice. After more than three centuries in an inhospitable land, the suffering of black Americans was elevated to a political, constitutional and moral matter of importance.

From the arrest of Rosa Parks onto the civil rights battlefields in the South, to the great 1963 march for freedom and beyond to his call for an end to the American military effort in southeast Asia, Dr. King embodied much of the greatness of his people. He is an eminent American hero. Over time, and seemingly always ahead of other leaders, Dr. King broadened the black Americans' struggle from the presentation of elementary grievances to a vision of a new American society based on humanistic principles. He died with that vision far from becoming a reality; yet because of his life, the vision is not an impossibility.

The KING Mural

AT THE MARTIN LUTHER KING MEMORIAL LIBRARY

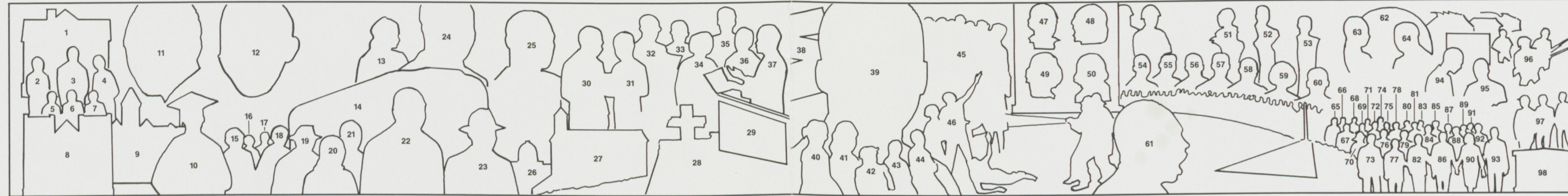
Unveiled on the First National Celebration of the King Holiday, January 20, 1986

Artist, DON MILLER



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1. Martin Luther King, Jr., birthplace, 501 Auburn Ave., NE, Atlanta, Ga. 2. Alberta Williams King (1904-1974), mother. 3. Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. (1899-1984), father. 4. Jennie C. Williams (d. 1941), maternal grandmother. 5. Alfred Daniel King (1930-1969), brother. 6. Christine King (b. 1927), sister. 7. Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968). 8. Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, where Rev. Alfred Daniel Williams (1863-1931, Dr. King's maternal grandfather), Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr., and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., were pastors. 9. Graves Hall, Morehouse College. 10. Martin Luther King, Jr., Morehouse College graduate, June 1948. 11. Dr. Benjamin E. Mays (1895-1984), president of Morehouse College, theologian, social reformer, Dr. King's mentor. 12. Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), Indian political and spiritual leader whose advocacy of non-violent civil disobedience deeply influenced Dr. King's political thinking and strategies. 13. Mrs. Rosa Parks (b. 1913). Her arrest for challenging the Montgomery, Ala., segregation ordinance on December 1, 1955, triggered the 381-day bus boycott that catapulted Dr. King to national importance as a civil rights leader. 14. Montgomery bus during the boycott. Boycott leaders: 15. Mrs. Erna A. Dungee, financial secretary of Montgomery Improvement Assoc. (MIA), which organized the boycott; a founding member of Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). 16. Mrs. Jo Ann Robinson, a leader of the Women's Political Council in Montgomery. 17. Rufus Lewis, Montgomery businessman; chairman of MIA transportation committee. 18. Mrs. A. W. West (d. 1975), instrumental as boycott carpool driver. 19. Rev. S. S. Seay, MIA founder; SCLC exec. board. 20. Mrs. Mary Banks, enthusiastic supporter of boycott; attended every rally and baked pies to raise funds. 21. Fred D. Gray (b. 1930), attorney for Mrs. Parks and MIA. 22. E. D. Nixon (b. 1899), Montgomery's principal black leader; first organizer of boycott and MIA; Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters official; Montgomery and Alabama NAACP head. 23. Dr. King, president of MIA;



leader of boycott. 24. Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy (b. 1926), MIA founder; pastor, First Baptist Church, Montgomery; Dr. King's close confidant; succeeded him as SCLC president. 25. Dr. King, arrested 29 times as a result of his civil rights activities. One of the most important moral statements in 20th-century American history, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," was written on April 16, 1963. 26. Alabama State House, Montgomery. 27. Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery. Dr. King became pastor on April 14, 1954. 28. A bombed black church, symbolic of the many attacks by extremist white opposition. 29. SCLC headquarters, Auburn Ave., Atlanta, Ga. Founded by Dr. King in 1957, SCLC involved black churches and religious leaders in the civil rights struggle. SCLC leaders: 30. Rev. Andrew J. Young (b. 1932), director of voter registration, later executive director. 31. Mrs. Dorothy Cotton, director of citizenship school. 32. Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker (b. 1929), first full-time executive director. 33. Rev. Joseph E. Lowery, second vice-president, later president. 34. Mrs. Septima P. Clark (b. 1898), supervisor of teacher training. 35. Bayard Rustin (b. 1920), veteran civil rights leader and tactician; advisor to Dr. King. 36. Miss Ella Baker (b. 1903), acting executive director of SCLC upon its for-

mation. Convened founding conference of Student Non-violent Coordinating Comm. (SNCC), April 1960. 37. Dr. King, president and founder. 38. Segregation signs, typical of the indignities faced by black Americans in the Jim Crow South. 39. Dr. King and his family: 40. Yolanda Denise King (b. 1955), daughter. 41. Coretta Scott King, Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr. (b. 1927). 42. Bernice Albertine King (b. 1963), daughter. 43. Dexter Scott King (b. 1961), son. 44. Martin Luther King, III (b. 1957), son. 45. Girls jailed during Birmingham demonstrations, May 1963. The involvement of hundreds of children in civil disobedience marked a successful tactical move by Dr. King and his advisors. By May 6, over 3,000 blacks, including many youngsters, were in jail. 46. Protesters being hosed during Birmingham demonstrations. The actions led by public safety commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor brought into clearer focus the infamy of segregation's defenders and the heroism of the civil rights cause.

The 16th Street Baptist Church was dynamited at 9:35 a.m. on Sunday, September 15, 1963, while parishioners assembled. This brutal act and the death of four girls, whom Dr. King called "heroines of a holy crusade for freedom and human dignity" was one of the most dreadful expressions of

opposition to the movement. 47. Addie Mae Collins, 14. 48. Carol Denise McNair, 11. 49. Carol Robertson, 14. 50. Cynthia Wesley, 14.

In flagrant violation of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, blacks in many parts of the South were denied the right to vote. 51. Rev. C. T. Vivian (b. 1924), director of affiliates, SCLC. 52. Rev. Fred L. Shuttlesworth (b. 1922), president of Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. 53. Rev. John R. Lewis (b. 1940), chairman, SNCC; exec. board SCLC.

Scores of men and women in the civil rights movement made costly sacrifices. Some gave their lives so that others could enjoy the fruits of the struggle. 54. Medgar W. Evers (1925-1963), NAACP field secretary in Mississippi, assassinated in front of his Jackson home, June 11, 1963. 55. Michael H. Schwerner (1939-1964), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) voting rights worker from New York found murdered in Philadelphia, Miss., August 4, 1964. 56. James E. Chaney (1943-1964) CORE voting rights worker from Mississippi found murdered in Philadelphia, Miss., August 4, 1964. 57. Andrew Goodman (1943-1964), CORE voting rights worker from New York found murdered in Philadelphia, Miss.,

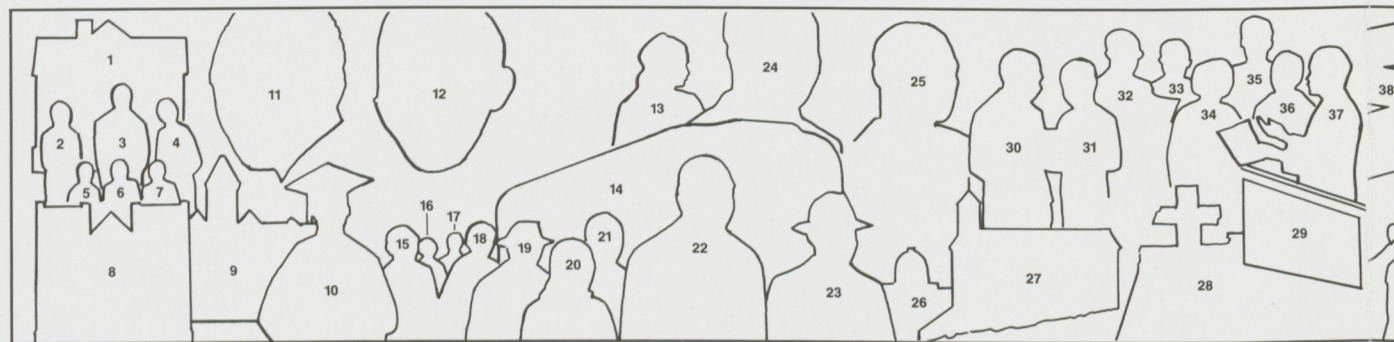
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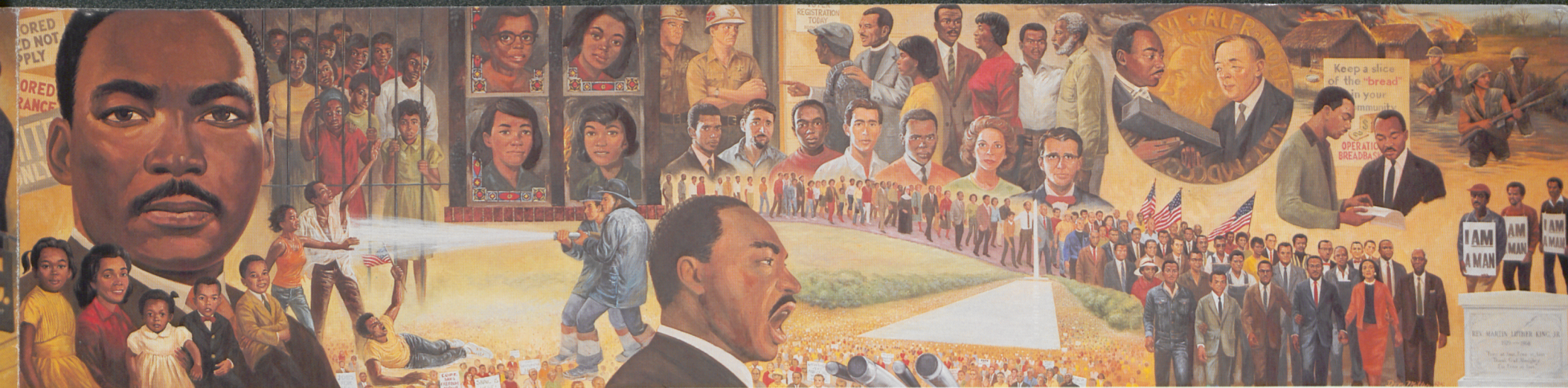
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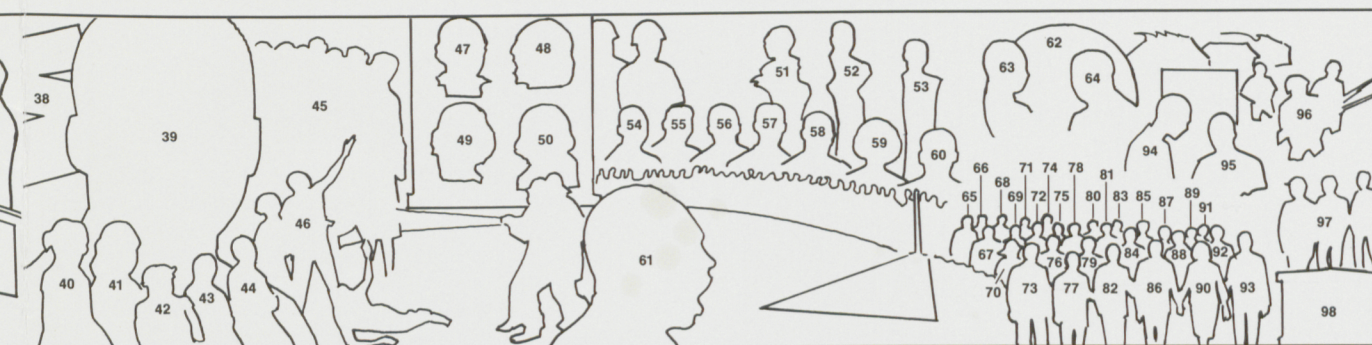
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AS MAYOR of the District of Columbia and Honorary Chairman of the King Mural Project, allow me to greet you and welcome you to our great city of Washington, D.C., and to the Martin Luther King Memorial Library.

In 1969 the District Government began observing Dr. King's birthday, and it has been an official holiday for our citizens since August 1975. This magnificent library, named in Dr. King's honor, has been the site of our official observance since 1973. During the last fiscal year nearly one million people visited the Martin Luther King Memorial Library seeking books and information or a restful respite from the hot or cold weather.

The addition of the mural is very appropriate and timely because it adds another dimension to the services and resources available to our citizens and visitors to our fine city.

This work of art by Don Miller is two things. First, it is a memorial to Dr. King and his leadership in helping our nation live up to its creed of fairness, justice and equality for all its citizens. Secondly, it is educational. The teaching of our history and culture, particularly to the young, is our legacy and responsibility. Our children and teenagers need to know who Martin Luther King, Jr., was and why we honor him today with a national holiday.

This mural is a vivid reminder of his lifelong nonviolent struggle to show that establishing justice and freedom for everyone, every day is not only the right thing to do but the morally imperative thing to do. It is now up to us to continue the movement by "Living the Dream" of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Board of Library Trustees deserves our thanks and gratitude for commissioning this mural by Don Miller. It is a lasting symbol of the commitment of

the Trustees and the City Government to the principles which Dr. Martin Luther King espoused.

Marion Barry, Jr., Mayor — District of Columbia
January 20, 1986

ABOUT THE ARTIST: For more than a generation, Don Miller's evocative images of black life remain true to the aesthetic values of people of African ancestry. Born in Jamaica, raised in Montclair, N.J., and a traveler through the African diaspora, Mr. Miller is an artist of extraordinary energy and ingenuity. A graduate of Cooper Union, Mr. Miller also attended the New School and the Art Students League. Among Mr. Miller's many achievements are his portraits of African nobility commissioned by Anheuser-Busch and Revlon. His works have been exhibited in museums, galleries and private collections in the U.S., Africa and West Indies.

Mr. Miller's King Mural is a tour de force — the nation's definitive visual documentation of Dr. King's great influence on modern American society. It is history revealed through Mr. Miller's careful research. He retraced the life of Dr. King by reading existing scholarship and interviewing the men and women who worked closely with Dr. King. The conceptual framework for the mural was drawn from the memories of these believers. To the many achievements and sacrifices of Dr. King and the movement he led, Don Miller has committed his talents as an artist. The mural summons the images of the Afro-American's finest hours in the struggle for social justice. It is a work of enormous historical scope, and, in keeping with Dr. King's life, it is a work having a deeply emotional connection to the history of black and white Americans from 1955 to 1968.



THE MARTIN LUTHER KING Memorial Library, the main building of the District of Columbia Public Library, opened in August 1972. An extensive study in 1961 by the firm of Booz, Allen and Hamilton had established the need for a new central library in the downtown business district. The original Carnegie Library, opened in 1903 at Mount Vernon Square, was unable to keep up with the growing needs of Washingtonians. The world-famous architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was commissioned to design the structure, and ground was broken at the 9th and G Street site in July 1968. By action of the Board of Library Trustees in 1971, the new building was named in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The new library, dedicated in September 1972, has contributed to the revitalization of the old downtown business and shopping area. Constructed of matte black steel, brick, and bronze-tinted glass, the building cost about

\$18,000,000 and provides 400,000 square feet of floor space on four floors above ground and three underground levels. It houses public service areas, including subject divisions, meeting rooms and exhibition space of the central library as well as the administrative and support services for all of the public libraries in Washington, D.C.

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